

## Sunflower Sister by 000Unknown000

**Series:** [Strange Bonds](#) [3]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Brother-Sister Relationships, Drawing, El comforting Will cause she's a pure sweet, El wants to draw a sunflower cause she wants mamma to know she loves her, F/M, I know Will and El aren't siblings but it needs to happen!, I'm going to eat an eggo after this, If the suffer brothers make poor Will spend a whole season in pain just ONE more time....., Jopper better become canon so Will and El can be awesome siblings, Nightmare, Nightmares, Sketchbook, Sleepovers, Sunflower, Sunflowers, Will teaches El how to draw, Yes there are eggos, leggo my eggo, mileven is only briefly mentioned sooo, poor will has a nightmare, sleepover

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Will Byers & Eleven | Jane Hopper

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**Summary:**

"Despite all the awe and mystery that surrounded her in his eyes, there was a strange connection between him and her that was somehow comforting."

Nightmares are a permanent part of Will's world. Tragically and fortunately for him, they're a part of El's world too.

## Sunflower Sister

### Author's Note:

Just like A Dark Possibility, this is something that's been sitting in my computer for a while that I decided to edit and share. I'm still not quite happy with it, but maybe that's just because I've been proofreading and editing it so many times. I seriously need to see Will and El actually interacting with each other in person and becoming great friends in season three.

An acidic liquid forced its way out his mouth through violent coughs, burning his throat. Vision slowly cleared, he hazily registered twisting and turning silhouettes of bare trees against the dark night sky. The far off twinkling stars he gazed at through his bedroom window throughout his childhood were replaced with thousands of white particles floating through the freezing air that bore into his bones.

With great effort, he pushed his drained and sore body off the ground and groaned when the sudden movement awakened a throbbing pain in his head. He sniffled and groggily rubbed his nose. When he brought his hand back down he saw traces of blood on his fingers.

In a daze, he scanned his surroundings and thought he must of been trapped in a vivid dream. He stood in a forest not unlike the ones surrounding Hawkins, except everything was in an unnatural blue haze. Gnarly vines infested the ground and ensnared hundreds of rotting trees. Through the metallic scent of dried blood in his nose, he could smell a foul stench in the air so strong he could almost taste it and was hesitant to breathe in whatever it was producing it.

How did he get here? One minute he was racing with one of his friends on their bikes, and the next he's here.

Where the hell is here?

He tentatively started walking, taking in every foreign, yet familiar

detail with a strange sense of Déjà Vu. This must be a dream, what other explanation is there?

His footsteps echoed through the forest, crunching so loud that anything near him could hear and be alerted of his presence. He cringed and almost involuntarily ceased walking. When he did, the footsteps continued behind him.

Adrenaline pumping through rapidly pulsing veins, he mustered what little courage he had left and tried to ignore the growing sickness in the pit of his stomach.

It's just a dream, it's just a dream, it's just a dream.....

Finally, he was able to force himself to turn around and face the source of the noise.

His entire body froze with a powerful fear that viciously tore at his chest and stomach and seconds turned to hours.

A mere 200 or so feet away was a....

in the shape of a human, but it couldn't of been anything close to one. It was far too big to be a person. It's skin was almost scar like and was a dark, sickly grey, where it's face should of been was just....empty skin. Its long legs and even longer arms were tipped with sharp claws that slowly carried it's gangly body across the ground in direction. This.... this- was fucking stalking him this whole time.

Snapping out of his horror induced trance, He slowly took a few steps back, not daring to make a single sound or quick motion. He didn't know what he was going to do, but something in his mind told him running would provoke it. The creature continued to creep along the ground, matching its pace with his. His heart drummed loudly in his ear, and every muscle felt like a spring being pulled back, ready to be released and take off.

“IT’S JUST A DREAM  
I’S JUST A DREAM  
IT’S JUST A DREAM

IT'S JUST A DREAM  
IT'S JUST A DREAM  
IT'S JUST A DREAM....”

The creature paused and cocked what looked like it's head as if to contemplate what to do now that it's potential prey noticed them. Despite not having any visible eyes, it felt like this thing was staring right into him.

They stared at each other for what felt like an eternity but was likely only less than a minute. Was it going to give up on ambushing him now that he was looking at him? He allowed himself to take a few deep breaths, waiting with agony for what's going to happen next, praying and willing for it to just go away.

He continued inching backwards, and the creature didn't follow, but instead of walking away, it's head seemed to open up and his stomach turned as he saw the head transition into bright red, mouth like flaps covered in hundreds of needle like teeth.

The creature suddenly lunged forward and like the trigger of a cocked gun finally being pulled after ages of carefully aiming from it's owner, he took off running. Faster than he knew he could run with the adrenaline pulsing through his veins.

The voice in his head screamed for him to wake up before thing thing caught him and did god knows what to him. His side ached along with his legs and chest, but he ignored the feeling and kept running. Through the pounding of heart in his ears he could hear the rapid footsteps of the creature getting louder and louder.

A red light slowly came into his view in the distance and his instincts told him he needed to get to it immediately, but he didn't know why. As he ran closer, he made out what sounded like a voice coming from the the light.

“WILL!”

“Mom?!” He shouted. Was he imagining her voice?

He soon realized the red light was coming a spot on the front of his

house, how he roundup there, he didn't know, but he didn't care. The spot appeared to be some sort of hole with a murky, transparent wall separating the outside world from a figure on the other side that was desperately pounding on it and repeatedly screaming his name.

“MOOOM!!!” Will shouted, this was his chance, he knew if he could get to her, then he'd be safe. The footsteps grew even louder, the creature was now right behind him. He was now about twenty feet away from his house, if he kept his pace up, then he'd make it.

The hole began to shrink and even more panic rose inside Will when it dawned on him that it might close before he can get to it, leaving him alone with the creature.

“HURRY WILL. HURRY!!!”

His vision started blurring with tears and it felt like his chest was about to burst. His feet bounded the wooden floor of the house's front porch, the hole was now as small as a basketball and his mother clawed at the edges, frantically trying stop it from disappearing.

“WILL!!”

“MOM!”

His hand landed on the solid planks of the wall, the red light was gone, leaving the porch in cold darkness. He could no longer hear his mother's voice. Panting, he stared at the wall in denial, before pounding his fists as hard as he could against, ignoring the pain of his skin on his hands opening into scrapes.

“MOOOOMM!!!!!!

MOOOM!!!

Mooom!

Mom!

mommy.....”

His screams turned to whimpers, then to sobs as his hands slowed. The creature's breath landed on the back of his neck. His body was too drained to take off again, and he knew that it was over.

He was going to die.

He simply cried and screwed his eyes shut, awaiting the the feeling of claws ripping through his flesh.

But he felt nothing.

He opened his eyes, and hesitantly turned around, still huffing. What he saw was not the creature's hideous form looming over him, but instead.....an empty field?

He looked around in a state of confusion, relief, and exhaustion., all rolled into one. The house had disappeared and the sea of endless trees were now patches dotting the outskirts of the vast, greyish dirt covered field. How the hell.....

A feeling of numbness washed over him, but he didn't feel calm. A sense of dread loomed over him, and his instincts told him he messed up horribly, but how? The creature was gone with no signs of anything else lurking nearby, and he was still alive, so why does he feel like something even worse was going to happen?

He felt something above pull at him, and he looked up his eyes locked onto an enormous mass hovering close above him. It felt somehow alive, completely fixated on Will's minuscule form, it's

.

He couldn't breathe, think, or move. His eyes saw the massive being moving in on him, engulfing him and the ground in the darkness of it's shadow, and he could hear it's body tear through the air like a tornado, but his mind couldn't register it. It was like his consciousness was retreating inside himself, trying to shelter itself from the pain and agony that lay ahead. It was like he became absolutely nothing.

His thoughts began to slowly stir as his vision filled with a dark cloud that surrounded him in what was sort of like a twister. He become aware enough to realise there was a quiet noise that somehow managed to reach his ears through violent, roaring wind.

His mind focused itself on the sound, blocking out the chaos around him, and the sound revealed itself to be a soft voice.

“Will....will....WILL!”

There was a weight on his hand and he suddenly jolted upright, gasping for air. Trembling and trying to catch his breath, his eyes darted around the still darkness of the surrounding woods. His shirt and hair clung to his skin from cold sweat.

“Are you okay?”

Will’s attention shifted to a brown eyed girl with short, curly hair kneeling beside him.

Once his eyes adjusted to the dark, the tension left his body as he recognized the bodies of his friends tucked into sleeping bags, peacefully snoring and mumbling incoherent sleep talk with a cabin a short distance away.

He remembered the day before when school let out for spring break, Dustin had asked what everyone wanted to do tomorrow whilst the the party was leaving the campus. After bouncing back and forth some ideas, Lucas suggested a sleepover (Will suspected he just wanted an excuse to spend more time with Max), and Max eagerly nodded her head (Will suspected she just wanted an excuse to not stay at her house with her step brother, whom Will heard one too many anger filled stories about).

Mike quickly reminded everyone that El wouldn’t be able to participate since she wasn’t allowed to go out into public yet, and they’re usual sleepover spot was in his basement (Will knew for a fact that he wanted to spend as much time with El as possible, Dustin and Lucas had already snidely confided in him that Mike was crazy about her, though Mike always vehemently denied it when teased for it.)

Dustin enthusiastically exclaimed that they should go camping in the woods outside the Hoppers’ cabin. Everyone agreed, though not quite as enthusiastically. Will was hesitant about going, thinking of his encounter with the demogorgon on the dark, wooded road.

The feeling of the shadow monster crawling through his body and controlling his thoughts and actions against his will, the agonizing burning sensation that overcame every inch of his skin as the soldiers set the vines ablaze was still fresh in his mind and may always will

be.

He said nothing though, he didn't want the others to think he was too scared to handle a one night camping trip. For the past year or so, everyone close treated him gently, looking for any sign that he would crack and he hated it. He knew it was only because they cared. If he was in their place he'd do the same, but he couldn't help but feel weak because of it.

"I-i.m fine." Will answered.

He tried his best to sound confident, but his his voice came out small and cracked. He looked down to check the time on his watch, he saw that El's hands were resting on top one of his and he kinda hoped they'd stay there. The glowing numbers read: 2:53 A:M. Shit.

"Bad dream?" El whispered.

"Yeah." He mumbled, hoping she wouldn't ask in that annoying, sympathetic voice everyone gave him.

Even if relaying his nightmare would somehow make him feel better, he didn't know how he could explain the the complete lack of feeling or thought he experienced when he saw the shadow monster. For some reason, that part of the dream was what bothered him the most. He felt more disturbed than scared.

"I'm sorry, did I wake you?" He asked, imagining himself shouting and crying in his sleep and since his sleeping bag was near El's, and irrationally feared that must be the reason she was up so late/ early.

"No." She whispered softly, looking down. "I...had bad dream too..."

"Oh". He said. That's when he noticed the glistening across her cheeks.

He was surprisingly glad about this. Normally when he'd wake in the middle of the night from a nightmare, he'd sit, in his empty room and contemplate going to his mom and sleeping with her like he had when he was younger. He'd decide against it because he knew how much she worried for him and saw first hand the effects of everything on her anxiety.



He wanted nothing more than for everything to go back to normal, to when the biggest worry of his family's days were money, or the divorce, even if it meant pretending he was doing better than he really was.

He'd usually end up staying up the rest of the night out of fear of having another nightmare and distract himself by reading, or drawing. If El was the same way, then maybe he could have some company for a change.

Something about her made him feel safe, and he didn't fully understand why. She was a mystery to him, her tendency to hardly speak coupled with his quiet nature and social awkwardness around people he didn't know well meant that even though he regularly visited her along with the rest of the party at her and Hopper's cabin, he never really didn't know much about her other than the stories he's been told.

Dustin and Lucas would always relay to him how she had done things like sending a whole van flying through the air, killing evil soldiers and agents, and facing off against the demogorgon among other impressive feats and overall, how amazing she was and how much they missed her. Mike had joined in at first, but as the year dragged on, he talked about her less and less, and Will noted that when her name was brought, how he'd become quiet and get a sullen look in his eyes. The only times he'd chip in was in Dustin or Lucas said anything about her being dead and insist she was missing and they'd quietly apologize.

"Sorry, Mike, she's missing...."

A part of Will wanted to ask El about her time at the lab out of morbid curiosity, but Mike had made a point of lecturing everyone, more specifically Max and Will, about her unique childhood and how they should try to not bring up any painful memories, or judge her too harshly when she's not familiar with the most basic of concepts or does something weird.

When Will asked what he meant by "weird", Dustin made a joke about how she tried to get naked in front of them. To Will's surprise, Mike, who was normally never aggressive, especially to friends,

punched his arm hard and looked at Dustin like he was about to strangle him.

“What!?” Dustin had exclaimed, both surprised and a little pissed.

“Why do you think she didn’t hesitate to change in front of us.” He coldly replied.

“I don’t know!” Dustin shouted.

‘Because those sick scientists had her getting naked in front of them since she was a little!’

Dustin had simply said “oh...” and looked down.

That was when it really dawned on Will that El really did grow up being treated like less than a human being. He had an idea of her abuse, but for some reason that was the moment that really made him comprehend it, and he wanted to just take all her pain and make it disappear completely, but the most he could give her after everything was politeness.

It was weird seeing how everyone treated El. Mike, Dustin, and Lucas acted like they’ve been close friends with her for a lifetime, especially Mike. He seemed to be one of few people who could get El to say more than just a word or two and for her to outwardly show emotion and express her thoughts with a twinkle of her eye and a faint smile hidden beneath her intense gaze.

His mother was very gentle and affectionate with how she spoke to her, almost as if something about El made her motherly instincts go into overdrive and in turn, El seemed to light up whenever she saw her. Of course, because El had been looked after by Hopper, she essentially became his baby, although the strong and hard headed chief of police would never, ever say it out loud, but everyone thought it whenever his lips would crack into a smile when she reached out to hold his hand or on the rare occasion she would call him “Dad”.

Everyone close to El treated her with care, like she as the most fragile girl in the world that needed their protection, even though in Will’s mind she was quite possibly the most powerful being on Earth, able to rip into through time and space and slay countless brutal creatures, and fight back against the MindFlayer when all Will could do was tremble in fear. It felt like no one could comprehend how this

petite and soft spoken girl who was still learning how to speak properly could be capable of so much.

Despite all the awe and mystery that surrounded her in his eyes, there was a strange connection between him and her that was somehow comforting. He assumed it was because of what's he's been told about her abilities and how she had protected everyone.

El stood up while Will was contemplating this, wrapping the oversized jacket that was likely Hoppers that ended in the middle of her upper leg tighter around herself and started walking to the cabin.

"Where you heading?" Will asked and got up to follow, not really wanting to be left alone.

"Food and water." El simply answered.

At this point point Wil was used to the way El spoke in incomplete sentences and rarely embellished them with proper grammar and speech, but it still came across as odd at times.

"Wait, but isn't Hopper asleep?" He asked as he caught up to her. The only bed he saw was El's, he assumed Hopper would be asleep on the living room couch.

El shrugged and said. "He's a heavy sleeper. I put some of his shaving cream on his face once and tickled him like they do on television, but he wouldn't wake up. He didn't notice until morning." A small smile formed at the last part.

"Really?" Will said, never really imaging her to be a prankster. He giggled at the image of a groggy Hopper walking around with shaving cream smeared all over his face and his reaction to finding out.

When they entered the cabin, as predicted, they were met with Hopper's loud snores and his passed out form on the couch. El silently poured two glasses of milk and popped two waffles into the rusty looking toaster. Will wasn't planning on asking for anything, but gratefully accepted his share when the sight and smell reminded him of the dryness in his throat and tight feeling in his stomach.

They ended up perched on the front porch steps, munching on their snacks and quietly chatting. Will pulled out the sketchbook he was gifted during Christmas and proceeded to fill the blank page with doodles using the porch light to see as was habit whenever he felt like he needed to clear his head.

El caught glimpses of the various creatures and scenes sprawled across the pages as he flipped through his sketchbook ranging from fierce looking monsters, to wizards casting powerful spells, to brave knights battling enormous dragons, to spaceships zooming through the galaxy. She watched with fascination as the assortment of lines and strokes from his crayons turned to colorful characters seemingly out of nowhere.

This made Will a little nervous as he is certain that the times where he is guaranteed to screw up horribly is when someone is watching him.

Will held out one of the large box of crayons he also received for Christmas and offered to let El borrow some. She looked at the various sketches across the page that definitely weren't anywhere near her stick figures and said. "I'm not very good...."

"I'm not very good either. It just takes some practice. You don't have to be amazing to enjoy it. Here, I'll help you, what do you want to draw?"

El paused to contemplate her options before answering, "Sunflower".

"Okay." Will said, smiling. He secretly loved flowers with all their bright colors, delicate shapes, and sweet smells. Sunflowers happened to be one of his favorites ever since he first walked through a huge field of them while visiting a relative who farmed them, where the large, cheerful flowers towered over his eight year old self and he felt like he was walking through a magical fairyland. He and Jonathan ended up playing tag there, using the sunflowers as cover to hide while they're mother yelled for them to be careful not to damage any of them.

He used to draw flowers all the time when he was younger, but his father saw them once and made a joke about him and his mom

having one son and one daughter. Will laughed it off, but the comment kind of hurt. He made sure to never stray away from drawing “manly stuff” afterwards, but El wasn’t the kind of person to judge someone for simply enjoying something, even if she understood why it might be laughable to some.

Will handed her some yellow, brown, orange, and green crayons and preceded to draw out the flower, giving El instruction to copy the shapes he made on the paper when she hesitated.

“Don’t press too hard, it’s better to press lightly, then keep going over it until the color is dark enough.” He explained when he noticed El jamming the crayon into the paper.

El nodded and followed his instructions closely, carefully copying the shapes he made of the seeds on the center part, the petals, leaves, and stem, until they ended up with two yellow and orange sunflowers side by side on the page. El’s looked a bit sloppy compared to Will’s, but she was delighted with the result, especially after Will complimented hers.

He went silent for a bit, before speaking again.

“Hey El.....can I ask you something?”

“You just did.” She answered, furrowing her eyebrows.

“No, what I meant was-” He stopped when he the corners of her mouth force themselves up a bit and realized she was messing with him and chuckled.

“When, you know....were looking for me....did you, uh, speak to me?”

El stared at him for what felt like eternity, just when he was beginning to believe she could never answer him, she whispered. “Yes....at Castle Byers”.

Will felt goosebumps raising across his skin. So she was there.

He remembered when he was trapped in that god awful place, and he kept going to his house to hide only to find even more vines and twisting around his family's deteriorated possessions, transforming

his once safe and warm home to a place built for nightmares. He'd try to make calls on the phone, only for his mother's frantic voice to attract to usher the calls of the creature outside the windows.

Before he could suppress them, his mind presented memories of him watching in overwhelming horror as the creature broke through the wall to reach his mother, all he could do was hide, screaming inside his head to do something, but couldn't fight against the fear induced paralysis as he heard the her fading screams.

He couldn't begin to describe the utter relief that washed over him when he the wall paper tear off to reveal his mother, alive and crying as much as he was. It was the first time since he been in that place that he felt hopeful. He almost let that hope shatter when he heard the distant cries of the creature, giving him no other choice than follow her orders to run and hide.

He ran to the fort crafted by him and his older brother, repeating his mother's promise of finding him over and over in his head. When that became too repetitive, he'd go back to softly singing the many songs introduced to him by Jonathan.

The constant frenzy of terror, starvation, dehydration, and toxic air left him weak, leaving him in and out of consciousness. Filling his head with wild dreams and hallucinations, some pleasant, some weird, and some nightmarish. As time went on, he struggled to hold on to wakefulness.

If he fell into sleep, he may not wake up.

He dug down deep within himself to hold on, but his body was becoming heavy, and his eyelids begged to stay close, his mind was fuzzy, and he was starting to not care anymore.

The air became warm, almost blistering against his cold skin. The chirps of distant and unrecognizable animals was snuffed out by utter silence that was almost deafening. An eerie calmness surrounded him, a pair of tender hands gingerly covered his own and washed him over with overwhelming relief.

"Your mother is coming, just hang on a little longer." A soft voice

whispered, it sounded caring, like it's owner wanted to shield him from the nightmare surrounding him.

He was too far gone to question it, forcing his eyes to open and whimper "Hurry...", then his stomach lurched as if he was falling into nothing. As quickly as it disappeared, the chilly air came back with a vengeance, and the calm faded to vulnerability, but it left behind renewed hope and a will to continue fighting.

At first it slipped from his memory, his mind focusing instead on the constant companionship of his mother and Jonathan, who would sometimes just sit by his bed, quietly holding his hand or stroking his hair, and the frenzied chatter of his friends.

The voice he heard only returned to his attention weeks after he was allowed to go back home. Will initially written it off as one of many dreams, but something told him there more to it. It wasn't until Dustin and Lucas were talking about the sensory deprivation tank the supposed girl with powers they befriended used to find him that he realised why.

Will was expecting El to be utterly confused by his question so he could settle the matter of his dream being just a dream, but instead El froze, the whites of her eyes nearly surrounding dark irises that nearly bore through him.

"You saw me?" She spoke with a surprising firmness in her voice that demanded answers, but was softened by her shock.

"Uh,...I-I don't know... Maybe. I might of heard you...." He answered, suddenly doubting himself and regretting asking. He dodged her gaze and stared at his feet resting on a wooden plank and added "It was probably nothing....."

El didn't seem deterred, in the same tone she inquired "Was there water?"

"What? Will looked back to her, his expression now matching hers. Through the silence, his mind had kept making up noises to fill the sudden void, including faint, rhythmic splashes that stopped moments before he heard the voice. But then again, he could be

remembering water purely because El mentioned it.

“I think so...why? Will was almost hesitant to know her motive for asking.

El's lips parted like she was going to respond, but closed and the girl swiftly turned her eyes back to the sketchbook balancing on both their knees and muttered, “Nothing”. Will contemplated pressing her, but decided he'd wait for a moment where she wasn't prepared to stubbornly deny him and tried to turn his attention to drawing, but could no longer concentrate.

Desperate to fill the silence that became suddenly awkward, Will began speaking again. “Hey El?” She turned her head just slightly to look at him, she looked like she was unconsciously bracing herself.

Will hurriedly prepared the words in his head, but all he could muster was “Thanks for....” Will trailed off, already unable to speak eloquently, but accepted defeat and continued with “For, yah know....everything.” He knew he could never make it up to her, there was nothing he could give her that would amount to all the lives she saved, and he hoped he could somehow make her understand just how much he meant his words.

“You don't have to keep saying thank you.” But her face softened, with the corners of her mouth lifting just a touch. Will blanketed his expression with a mock look of seriousness and said “Well, you know I'm going to keep thanking you until you get sick of it.”

El raised her eyebrows and widened her smile to silently say “Oh really?”. Will leaned in obnoxiously close to her and chanted in her face “thankyouthankyouthankyouthankyouthankyouthankyou.....”

El's demeanor brightened and she giggled while playfully shoving him, nearly knocking him off the step and breaking his rant with gasps for air preceding fits of laughter.

When morning came and the reluctance to leave the warmth of their sleeping bags finally faded, Max and the boys got up and groggily noted that El and Will's sleeping bags were mysteriously empty. Once they became alert enough, they followed the quiet sound of snoring



and found the pair slumped against each other on the cabin steps with a fallen sketchbook by their feet and crayons strewn about all around them.

In fits of giggles followed by angry hushes to be quiet, Lucas came up with the idea to sneak up on the pair and simultaneously shout any ridiculous phrases they could think of as loud as their lungs would allow to wake them up.

The plan was a funny one at first, until the young teens wound up begrudgingly climping into the chief's car while he half heartedly muffled his laughs while El hovered around to apologize for the millionth time.

The parents were bewildered that their children could receive so many bruises from a “minor” bike (and skateboard) crash.

#### **Author's Note:**

Does Will have psychic senses like El does? We'll see (or rather, hope). If Jopper doesn't become a thing so El and Will can become brother and sister, and Joyce can be a mother figure to El, I'm gonna sue. (Though, I still feel guilty for shipping Jopper so hard because of Bob, poor thing was way too good to die the way he did.)